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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1469
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001157

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EEB, EUR/CARC
PLEASE PASS TO USTDA DAN STEIN
ENERGY FOR EKIMOFF/THOMPSON
COMMERCE FOR HUEPER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/03/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EPET](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: BERDIMUHAMEDOV SAYS NO DELIMITATION,
NO TRANS-CASPIAN PIPELINE

Classified By: Charge Sylvia Reed Curran for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) During a wide-ranging meeting September 3 with Deputy Assistant Secretary George Krol (septel), President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov said Turkmenistan has no problem with a trans-Caspian pipeline, but the need for delimitation is standing in the way. If delimitation is not solved, how can one talk about a trans-Caspian pipeline, he asked? Although he did not know the reason why, Berdimuhamedov claimed that Azerbaijan, by its actions and responses to the Turkmen, appears not to be supportive of progress towards a trans-Caspian pipeline.

¶2. (C) Berdimuhamedov said he had been deeply offended, because he had opened his "soul and heart" to the Azeris, but they did not support Turkmenistan's constructive proposal regarding the Caspian. He said Turkmenistan would not put the proposal forward again. He noted that Turkmenistan had for years been unwilling to engage with Azerbaijan. However, as soon as Turkmenistan was prepared to move forward, it seemed that problems surfaced from the other side.

¶3. (C) The president said he respected Aliyev as a person and had warm feelings toward him and the Azeri people. Nevertheless, he thought it might take time to solve the issues of a trans-Caspian pipeline and Caspian delimitation with Azerbaijan. He wondered what might be the real reason behind the Azeri attitude.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: The president's insistence that a trans-Caspian pipeline is not possible without delimitation is not new. What is important, however, is his continuing sense of ill-usage by the Azeris. We have heard several times that the president was genuinely offended by incidents in which Azeri coast guard cutters stopped Turkmen vessels carrying out gas exploration in blocks III and I. While we continue to believe that it should be up to Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan to work out their problems between themselves, Berdimuhamedov clearly considers the ball is in Azerbaijan's court. END COMMENT.

15. (U) DAS Krol cleared this cable.
CURRAN